

# BRIEFING SHEET

## RESIDENTIAL SAMPLING

COEUR D-ALENE RIVER BASIN

MARCH 20 - APRIL 7, 2000

Beginning on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> through approximately April 7<sup>th</sup>, field crews employed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be working in residential yards and homes in the areas listed below. Approximately 50 homeowners have volunteered to have their yards sampled. Results of the sampling will determine whether metals contamination exists at levels that might require cleanup actions.

EPA is providing this briefing sheet to help answer questions that you might have concerning this sampling effort. If you would like more information or are interested in having your yard sampled and it has not already been sampled, please call the following toll free number 1-877-284-0399.

### Background

Silver was discovered in the Coeur d-Alene River Basin more than 100 years ago. Active mining of silver, lead, cadmium, copper, and gold began shortly thereafter. The mining and associated milling and smelting operations have generated waste known as *tailings* that possibly contain high concentrations of metals such as arsenic, lead, zinc, mercury, and cadmium. Some of these metals, particularly lead, have been detected in the Coeur d-Alene River Basin. This prompted environmental studies in surrounding residential areas, as well as along the river and at beaches and recreational areas. These comprehensive sampling efforts will help identify potential health risks to people exposed to these metals. Results of these sampling efforts will help decide about possible cleanup activity.

### Sampling

EPA is working with the consulting team of URS Greiner Woodward-Clyde / CH2M HILL / White Shield to perform sampling of yards, gravel driveways, play areas, gardens, and drinking water. The sampling will occur at 50 residences in the following Coeur d-Alene River Basin towns: Wallace, Osburn, Kingston, Silverton, Mullan, Pinehurst, and Kellogg (outside the Bunker Hill 21-square mile *Abox*).

### Sampling Procedures

Three separate crews have been tasked to perform the sampling:

- ☐ Three 3-member sampling crews will be working in the residential areas over a 2 to 3 week period
- ☐ Soil samples will be collected using hand-coring and collection equipment, such as spoons, shovels, and augers, to a maximum depth of 2 feet
- ☐ Tap water will be collected from residences using private well or spring water. The water will be collected from faucets at the beginning of the day, prior to any showers or water use, and again after water has run through the pipes
- ☐ The soil and water will be analyzed using established analytical procedures. The metals of most concern in this sampling are arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury, and zinc.

## **Results**

Sampling results will be available in the summer of 2000. Homeowners who had their yards sampled will receive a letter with the results of their samples. The following toll free telephone number will include message updates concerning the sampling results: 1-877-284-0399. If there are any questions concerning this sampling please contact Marianne Deppman, EPA Community Relations, at 1-800-424-4372 or 206-553-1237. The local telephone number for the URS Greiner field office in Kellogg is 786-1401. Calls to the local number will be answered by field crew until approximately April 7, 2000.